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[Circular, No. 2.]

St. John's, Oct. 4, 1884.

BRETHREN,—

In our last circular we opened up to you the mission and the duties which were entrusted to us as a Committee by the P. G. Lodge, and we limited our address to a general statement of the present political position. Our advice to the Members of the Order was confined to the request that none of them should commit themselves to any definite political action, lest such action, by way of promise or otherwise, might afterwards conflict with the general policy which it would be desirable for the Order to pursue. We made, also, certain practical suggestions which had in view the furnishing of information by Outport Lodges to the Central Committee in St. John's as to the general feelings of the Brethren in each locality.

This general Address we deem it expedient to follow by a more particular declaration of that general policy which we regard as essential to the welfare of the Order, and to the protection of Protestant interests in this Island.

There has never been an epoch in our political history

which called for so much care and circumspection in the pronouncement of the principles which we desire to see prevailing, and in the selection of the men to whom, as a Government, the carrying out of these principles is to be entrusted.

It is our duty to declare these principles.

It is for you to bring them into activity, by the selection of men who may have your confidence, as fitted for the important task of carrying them into practical operation.

We believe that we are not over-estimating our power and influence, when we assume that the Loyal Orange Association in Newfoundland, acting as a united body, is a force which cannot be withstood in any political contest. And recognizing that power, we are impressed with the great responsibility which is involved in its exercise.

Whilst, therefore, we make no suggestions, at present, as to the men of your choice in the various Districts, we feel ourselves constrained to expound the general principles to which, as an Organization, we should be pledged, and which should guide your selection.

The general principles which we desire to declare are not simply those which directly concern the interests of the Order, but such as must meet the approval of Protestants within or without our ranks, and such as should tend to the consolidation and harmonization of the Protestant body in Newfoundland.

With this view, then, we approach the consideration of some matters, in respect of which, as we conceive, the necessities of the time demand a Protestant Union.

We have been constrained to recognize the united solidity of the mass of Roman Catholic representatives in all political struggles; and this very solidity has given them, from time to time, a powerful influence, even against a Protestant majority. It is only by disunion and discord amongst Protestants that Roman Catholics have achieved their control over public affairs; but when that severance of Protestants has taken place, the Roman Catholics have invariably been masters of the situation. Recent events, and the present position of public affairs, have brought home to us this conclusion in a manner which must be humiliating to all Protestant hearts, and productive of indignation in every Protestant breast.

It follows from these considerations that the unity of Roman Catholics in political matters can only be met and combatted by a similar union of Protestants.

It is for us to decide upon what basis such Protestant Union is practicable.

It is evident, we are persuaded, that this much-to-be-desired Union of Protestants must be attained by means of measures rather than of men. No man, however exalted his position, or however favourably regarded in his personal capacity he may be, can be permitted to obstruct the march of Protestant principles, or interfere with Protestant unity. But the men selected should be true men and tried men, and with regard to whom the Brethren are persuaded that they would sacrifice no Protestant principle for political expediency or personal aggrandizement.

Regarding, then, the present position of affairs we consider our unity as Orangemen and Protestants as the matter of supreme importance, and we hail with pleasure the attempt which has been made by an external organiza-

tion to promote this Protestant Union ; and we recognise and endorse its action so far as this collateral body may work in accord with our Order. We see every reason to anticipate harmony in our action with the "Protestant Union." But to our Brethren we have to submit that they must still regard the pronouncements of the Orange organization, as imposing upon them duties which no outside Association can exact from them ; and that the pronouncements of this Grand Lodge are to be preferred to those of any other Association.

Our Brethren, then, must be prepared to oppose all compromise and coalition with the Roman Catholic party. The present deplorable condition of our affairs is attributable to the fact that, without the consent of the Protestant constituencies, and without their knowledge, previous to last Election, an amalgamation with Roman Catholics was effected after the Election, by which the virtual control of the affairs of the Colony was given into their hands. It must be admitted that in the councils of the country our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens are entitled to the representation of their numbers and their power ; and, for purposes of practical policy, it would be as unwise as it would be unfair to ignore them and to form an Executive purely Protestant.

This equitable principle has been recognised by every Protestant Government, though not to the same extent as is acknowledged by the present Administration ; but there is a limit to its effectuation, and that limit is passed when Roman Catholics are allowed three seats at the Executive Board, and when all the Roman Catholic representatives are accepted as supporters of the Government, and exercise their powerful and united influence in the affairs of the

party, which directs the whole Legislation of the Island. Such a condition of affairs as now exists is to be deprecated and avoided in the future.

In the present autumn a Census of the Island will be taken which will show the relative numbers of the various religious denominations. This census, as we may safely predict, will show a large proportionate increase of Protestants, and a much smaller relative increase of Roman Catholics. At present there is grave injustice done to Protestant electors in the various districts of the Island, and the Roman Catholics have, in the House of Assembly, a much larger representation than their numbers would entitle them to have. As a consequence of this inequality, they are receiving from year to year public grants to which they are not entitled, and exercising an undue weight in the affairs of the country. This is a wrong which must be corrected by a well considered reform of the representation of the Island; and a REPRESENTATION BILL must be introduced, which will reconstruct the districts, and give to the Protestants of the country that equal share in the representative body, which their numbers wealth and intelligence demand and justify.

In order to qualify men for the intelligent exercises of their rights as voters, a broad and independent system of education is essential. We commit ourselves to the declaration that in educational matters the former policy of our Legislation has proved a failure. From motives of political expediency, there has been a severance between the education of Protestants on the one hand and Roman Catholics on the other. But the error has gone beyond this simple severance, and has extended to the division of the Protestant Educational Grant amongst the several de-

nominations of Protestants; a division which has promoted and continued sectarian differences which have seriously obstructed the educational advancement of the people.

As Protestants it is our duty to correct all abuses, and to prevent all contingencies which interfere with the utmost freedom of intelligent thought and action. Our Protestantism has no apprehension by reason of increasing enlightenment or extended education. Education and Protestantism go hand in hand. Education means "freedom of thought," in the best sense of the phrase; not the freedom of thought that leads to atheism or infidelity; but the freedom of thought which raises a man above the trammels of sect, and enables him to unite with his fellows on the grand common ground of the Christian religion. The Educational Grant of the country has been rendered powerless by its subdivision, and to render our educational service efficient should be one of our most pressing duties. By means of an Educational Union, such as a free system of education would bring about, the true Protestant Unity would be found to be best conserved.

Under each succeeding Government grave wrong has been done to the Protestant Districts of the Country. These have always been the independent districts which, while they have contributed largely to the revenue, have received no proportionate share of the legislative grants to which they were entitled, and have been compelled to submit to an assessment for the support in idleness of men less industrious or less thrifty than themselves.

But even in the administration of the insufficient and inequitable grants which the Protestants receive they have been unfairly treated. Road Grants, Poor Grants, Grants for public improvement have been used by Gov-

ernments, as so many means of consolidating their power. The disposition of these grants and the expenditure of the moneys voted is too often placed in the hands of men who are dishonest and corrupt, and whose only recommendation to office is that they are subservient tools of the ministry of the day. The Protestant Districts are thus trebly robbed. First: In not receiving their fair proportion of the public moneys. Second: In being compelled to pay for the thriftlessness or vice of pauper districts; and, Third: In having wasted and purloined, by means of dishonest commissioners, the small allocations which from time to time are voted to them. A remedy for these abuses should be urgently demanded and that remedy would seem to consist in a system of local self-government and if need be of local self-taxation. The district should have the power of electing its own Commissioners, without reference to the Government. Each District should support its own poor out of its own Poor Grant, and should not be called upon to contribute towards the relief of pauperism in other districts, a contribution which in most cases simply encourages idleness, waste, and vice.

The details of such a scheme it is not our province to suggest; but we are entirely agreed that the question of Local Government and the limited liability of a district to support its own poor only, are of vital importance and should command your support.

These, Brethren, are questions, in which as Protestants we are all interested; and it is only because they have a bearing upon our common Protestantism, that we have judged them worthy of a place in this Address.

We commend these important subjects to your earnest and serious consideration, persuaded that you will, under

all circumstances, regard the interests of our Order as paramount over all smaller concerns, and that you will recognise the welfare of our Protestant institutions, and especially of the Loyal Orange Association, as its principles are expounded by this Grand Lodge, as the chief objects which, as a political organization, we should aim to secure.

Yours in Love and Loyalty,

RICHARD T. RANKIN, *Acting Chairman.*

WILLIAM H. PIPPY, *Secretary.*

ADDENDUM.

In order to show the injustice done to Protestants in the Representation of the country, we append the following statement. The figures are based on the census of 1874, but the census of the present year will show that the injustice is even greater to-day than it was ten years ago, as Protestants have largely increased in their proportion :

- 1 { The *Roman Catholic* District of St. John's West had a population of 12,763, and returns *Three* Members.
The *Protestant* District of Harbour Grace had a population of 13,055, and returns *Two* Members only.
- 2 { The *Roman Catholic* District of Harbour Main had a population of 7,174, and returns *Two* Members.
The *Protestant* District of Brigus and Port-de-Grave had a population of 7,919, and returns *One* Member only.
The *Protestant* District of Bay-de-Verds, with a population of 7,434, returns *One* Member only.*
- 3 { The *Protestant* District of Twillingate and Fogo, which will show, by the present census, a population of over 18,000, returns *Three* Members only ; while
The *Roman Catholic* District of Placentia and St. Mary's, with a population not exceeding 10,000, returns *Three* Members.
- 4 { The *Roman Catholic* District of Ferryland, with a population of 6,419, returns *Two* Members.

* In other words, in the two Districts of Brigus and Bay-de-Verds 15,353 Protestants return only the same number of Members as 7,174 Roman Catholics in the District of Harbour Main.

